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ABSTRACT

Support for Innovative Teacher Projects was a 12-month program implemented by the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) of Nassau County, New York, designed to encourage and assist teachers in developing innovative projects in priority areas and in applying for funding. In collaboration with a university school of education, the project developed professional procedures for applying for support and objective criteria for selection of projects to be supported. Priority areas for teacher projects were identified as curriculum development, inservice development, contribution to teaching, cost effective programs, and community involvement. This report provides information on the project's background and accomplishments, with discussion of project components which included a five-member teacher committee responsible for the following: (1) acting as liaison between project staff and building teachers and administrators; (2) planning professional procedures; and (3) selecting teacher proposals for further consideration in the process. Evaluation of the project is addressed through establishment of evaluation criteria and surveys regarding teacher interest and collaboration. Implementation and dissemination strategies are discussed. Recommendations for program improvement and continuance deal with such topics as: (1) financial support for projects; (2) role of the teacher committee; and (3) encouraging wider teacher participation. (CB)

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Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County
Salisbury Center
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Westbury, New York 11590

Secretary's Discretionary Program:
Planning Grant to Develop Teacher Incentive Projects

FINAL REPORT

SUPPORT FOR INNOVATIVE TEACHER PROJECTS

Grant Number: G008510185

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ABSTRACT

SUPPORT for INNOVATIVE TEACHER PROJECTS

Support for Innovative Teacher Projects was a twelve-month program implemented by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) of Nassau County, New York and funded through a Planning Grant to Develop Teacher Incentive Structures provided by the Secretary's Discretionary Program.

The program designed a plan whereby teachers were encouraged and assisted in developing innovative projects in priority areas and in applying for support. In collaboration with a university school of education, the program developed professional procedures for applying for support and objective criteria for selection of projects to be supported. A survey of BOCES teachers produced data which was used to assign weights to various criteria. The weights were assumed to reflect values which were considered important by the teachers.

A teacher committee rated the teacher-developed projects on each of the criteria using blind review. Four teachers were required to provide additional information regarding logistics of their proposed projects. Two teacher-developed projects were selected to receive funds for implementation.

Program evaluation, conducted through teacher and peer committee assessments, indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program and favored its continuance. The teacher committee drafted a set of recommendations regarding future implementation of this program, including a redefinition of the project selection process to allow for a more qualitative approach in evaluation and selection. Phase I was a sorting process to identify projects which merited further consideration. Phase II was the determination of realistic logistics by one or more administrators who would examine feasibility of implementation and articulate any relevant concerns, and also the attainment of clarifications from the applicant. Phase III was actual project approval and release of funds.

Application of the procedures for review, selection, award, and implementation of innovative teacher-developed projects was accomplished to determine necessary procedural modifications prior to implementation of a districtwide program to support innovative teacher projects.

Plans and procedures for review, selection, award, and implementation of innovative teacher projects were disseminated locally, regionally, and nationally.

I. Project Overview

A. Purpose

Support for Innovative Teacher Projects was conducted by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County, New York as a pilot program prior to districtwide implementation of a plan to encourage and assist teachers in developing innovative projects in priority areas and in applying for support for their projects. The program developed professional procedures for applying for support and objective criteria for selection of projects to be supported. A committee of teachers reviewed the projects using the professional and objective criteria developed through university and district collaboration. Two teacher-developed projects were selected to receive an award of funds for implementation.

B. Background

This program originated from the belief that classroom professionals have the ability to solve problems, to innovate and manage educational projects, and to recognize and select meritorious projects for support. In addition, by enabling deserving classroom teachers to further their own creative projects, the program offered the added benefit of providing prestige and recognition to deserving classroom teachers.

The program addressed the following needs:

- the need to demonstrate the effectiveness of developing teacher incentive structures in the improvement of quality of elementary and secondary level teaching
- the need to support teacher-developed and teacher-managed projects
- the need to provide nonsalary incentives for teachers in order to make the teaching profession more attractive to a wider range of talented individuals
- the need to encourage and support excellence and innovation in one or more of the following priority areas: curriculum improvement, in-service development, contribution to teaching, cost-effective programs, and community involvement

The twelve-month program was designed as a collaboration between the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County and professors at Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus. The purpose of this collaboration was to benefit from the university's experience with innovative projects and its ability to instigate interest at the teacher training level in the development of such projects. The university professors were instrumental in designing a plan aimed at stimulating teacher innovation, as well as in developing the professional procedures

and objective criteria by which submissions for support of innovative teacher projects were applied for, reviewed, and selected.

C. Project Description

1. Summary of accomplishments

Project staff and the teacher committee designed a plan for encouraging and assisting teachers to develop projects in priority areas and to apply for support. The plan incorporated various public relations and guidance efforts including the establishment of project representatives.

In collaboration with a university School of Education, project staff and the teacher committee developed professional procedure and objective criteria for applying for support and for review and selection of teacher-developed projects. Collaboration with a university School of Education was effective in developing teacher survey materials and grant application forms.

In conjunction with the development of criteria, a survey was designed in order to identify and weight criteria according to teachers' priorities. The weighted criteria provided the objective means by which the teacher committee evaluated proposals.

Two teacher-developed projects were awarded funds and implemented. Taking the project full-cycle through the project selection and implementation stages was useful for determining modifications prior to districtwide implementation.

Teacher assessment indicated high levels of awareness about the program. A majority of teachers indicated that they would consider participating in similar programs in the future. Teachers favored continuation of the program.

Dissemination activities were conducted locally, regionally, and nationally.

2. Project components

The overall program provided support for innovative proposals by teachers in an area of priority, i.e., curriculum improvement, in-service development, contribution to teaching, cost-effective programs, and community involvement. The program developed and implemented professional procedure and objective criteria in the process of applying for, evaluating and selecting teacher-developed proposals. Moreover, the program incorporated collaboration between the program personnel and a university School of Education.

The program consisted of the following interrelated components:

- stimulating teacher interest and guiding development of applications for teacher projects
- procedural planning and criteria development
- collaboration between the project and a university school of education
- project selection and implementation
- evaluation
- dissemination

3. Project objectives

The project addressed five objectives, as follows:

Objective 1: To develop a plan whereby teachers will be encouraged and assisted in developing applications for support for innovative projects which will have an impact in one or more of the following areas of priority: curriculum development, in-service development, contribution to teaching, cost-effective programs, and community involvement.

Objective 2: To develop professional procedure to be utilized by teacher applicants seeking support for innovative projects, and to develop objective criteria to be used for selection of projects by peer review.

Objective 3: To collaborate with a university school of education in developing a plan designed to stimulate innovation in teachers and prospective teachers and in developing professional procedures and objective criteria by which applications for support of innovative teacher projects may be applied for and evaluated.

Objective 4: To pilot, on a very abbreviated scale, project development and application for support by teachers and selection by peer review of an innovative project for support.

Objective 5: To disseminate on a local, regional and statewide basis the plans and procedures for support for innovative teacher projects.

An overview of project activities was presented in the original proposal and appears in Appendix A.

4. Personnel

The project staff included a Project Director, Project Coordinator, Project Manager, and Senior Researcher. Each of the key personnel had clearly defined responsibilities.

The Project Director:

- facilitated accomplishment of project objectives
- utilized a direct line of communication to the Nassau BOCES District Superintendent and the Board of Education
- reported to state and federal agencies
- maintained liaison
- participated in local, state, and national meetings
- directed major dissemination activities

The Project Coordinator:

- provided administrative supervision and coordination of project personnel
- disseminated information statewide
- provided advocacy and support in dealing with government and community organizations and BOCES instructors

The Project Manager:

- developed planning procedures
- scheduled and coordinated project activities
- prepared and disseminated information and maintained records regarding such dissemination
- directed monthly meetings of university professors, committee of teachers and senior researcher
- prepared interim and final reports
- maintained records of collaborative meetings
- obtained curriculum assessments and critiques of plans
- supervised maintenance of records re: requests for information, attendance at development workshops, description of plans for innovative projects, and applications for support

The Senior Researcher:

- prepared review of literature
- conducted evaluation activities
- analyzed data and report results
- developed assessment and recordkeeping forms
- assisted in the preparation of interim reports
- prepared the final report

Project personnel also included an organized teacher committee consisting of five teachers who fulfilled the following responsibilities:

- acted as liaison to the teachers and building administrators
- planned professional procedures and objective criteria in collaboration with C. W. Post professors
- reviewed and revised project material
- publicized and promoted the project to teachers and to building administrators
- selected proposals to be awarded support from among a number of teacher-developed proposals

II. Project Evaluation

A. Evaluation Plan

An evaluation plan guided data collection activities. This plan, presented in the original proposal, outlines activities, evaluation questions, and data to be collected based upon each of the objectives. Evaluation activities included maintaining logs and descriptions of planning and development activities, developing questionnaires, collecting and analyzing data, and preparing this final evaluation report.

B. Teacher Encouragement and Assistance

Teacher interest was stimulated and encouraged through public relations efforts planned and implemented by the Project Manager and the teacher committee. Committee members identified a representative for liaison with each BOCES program. In addition, flyers were distributed to faculty members in each of the BOCES programs. A description of the grant was provided to teachers at faculty meetings either by a member of the teacher committee or by a building representative. These presentations were followed-up with artwork on the bulletin boards of the faculty rooms.

Teacher requests for more information focused on the types of ideas that would be considered acceptable and also on questions concerning application procedures. As individual teachers indicated interest and began to generate their ideas for proposals, they were encouraged to share their ideas with their building administrators prior to development and submission of a grant application.

Grant application forms were distributed directly into teacher mailboxes by the members of the teacher committee members and by building representatives. Approximately ten days before the applications' due date, teacher committee members and building representatives placed reminder signs in the faculty rooms.

C. Establishment of Objective Criteria

1. Development of criteria

A review of literature provided a basis for the development of a survey which attempted to identify criteria for proposal evaluation and selection (Appendix B). The project staff developed a draft for a survey instrument designed to elicit teachers' opinions regarding the relative importance of the various criteria. Prior to its distribution, the revised survey was refined by Dr. Paula Lester, an instrumentation specialist at the School of Education, Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus.

The final version of the Teacher Survey identified ten criteria used for evaluating proposals. The instructions directed teachers to rank each criterion in terms of its relative importance in evaluating and selecting teacher-developed projects for funding. Then, teachers were instructed to rate the importance of specific components within each criterion. Thus, criteria and components important to teachers may be identified and weighted according to teachers' priorities.

The survey was distributed to the teachers at each of the Nassau BOCES schools during faculty meetings convened by the building administrators expressly for this purpose. This procedure expedited the distribution and collection of the surveys. The willingness of administrators to delegate time for completion of the surveys at the conclusion of a school year characterized an extraordinary degree of administrative cooperation and support for this project.

2. Survey Results

Two hundred twenty-one surveys were obtained from 15 Nassau BOCES schools, a response rate of 43 percent. Three-fifths of the respondents were special education teachers. The next largest groups, slightly more than one-tenth, respectively, were speech and reading teachers and occupational education teachers. Psychologists, social workers and guidance counselors comprised

slightly less than one-tenth of respondents. Physical education teachers, music and art teachers, adult education teachers and work experience counselors altogether represented fewer than one-tenth of the total response.

Teacher rankings of the importance of criteria for evaluating teacher-developed classroom projects indicated a descending order of importance as follows:

- need
- objective
- activities
- overall quality
- staff
- budget
- facilities
- evaluation
- dissemination
- advisement

Each criterion was defined according to specific and relevant components which had been determined collaboratively by project staff, the teacher planning committee, and university personnel. For most of the criteria (activities was the one exception), the teachers considered that components within a category were equally important. Based upon this observation, the decision was made to "collapse" the components within each criterion. A weighted procedure was then developed by assigning to each criterion a relative weight or point-value based upon teacher mean rankings. Thus, in evaluating and selecting teacher-developed proposals, a teacher committee may effectively use a weighting procedure determined on the basis of criteria rankings to ensure that teacher-developed proposals are evaluated and selected according to values which are considered important by the teachers.

3. Effectiveness

The teacher survey was useful in determining relative importance of criteria according to teachers. However, use of the weighted procedure and a strictly quantitative approach in actual project selection was found to be "too rigid."

The teacher committee favored a more qualitative approach in the review, evaluation, and selection process. Such an approach would allow sufficient time for all submissions to be read and discussed by the members of the group prior to any attempt at objective rating. After a first reading and discussion of all the proposals, the teacher committee would begin to sort the proposals, identifying them appropriately as "unacceptable," "acceptable," "and highly acceptable." A quantitative approach would be applied to proposals of poor quality, to eliminate them from further consideration. Each of the remaining proposals would then be discussed as to its merits and deficiencies, with the innovativeness of a project as the primary consideration.

The committee redefined the process of project selection, creating a three phase process. Phase I was selecting teacher-developed projects which merited further consideration. Phase II was the determination of realistic logistics by one or more administrators who would examine the feasibility of implementation and articulate relevant concerns. The committee would obtain any necessary clarifications from the applicant re: student participation, staffing, parental permission, costs, liability, transportation, etc. Phase III was actual project approval and release of funds.

Insofar as weighted assessment procedures provided a measure of objectivity, such procedures were useful. However, the committee acknowledged that there existed criteria and components which eluded objective measurement. Moreover, there may have been cases where a proposal was overwhelming in certain important criteria or components to an extent that a condition of adequacy in other components was sufficient for successful implementation.

The committee recommended discontinuing the use of assigned weights for assessment of the extent to which proposals achieved each stated criterion. It was sufficient to determinate that a project did or did not fulfill criteria.

The teacher committee did not develop rules for the use of the recommended (now sans weighting) instrument nor for the extent to which the instrument would be given precedence in decision-making. The committee did recommend placing emphasis on the need for qualitative, not quantitative, evaluation. Analysis of the criteria used in the survey led to recommendations for modification.

The teacher committee believed that it was unnecessary to include a dissemination plan in teacher-developed proposals. Publicity and dissemination was considered to be an administrative function requiring teachers' cooperation, but not their planning.

Similarly, the teacher committee believed that teachers need not include assurances of advisement. Awareness of the building administrator in regard to a proposed project was considered to be sufficient.

Ultimately, it was recommended that the teacher selection committee, and not an objective instrument, must be responsible for proposal evaluation and selection. The committee placed its confidence in a democratic and apolitical review process founded on a belief in the validity of human judgment and the integrity of the teacher selection committee to recognize and support excellence and innovation by teachers in priority areas.

D. Collaboration

The development of application procedures, of criteria to include in the teacher survey, and of evaluation processes was the result of ongoing collaboration between professors from the School of

Education at Long Island University, project staff, and the teacher review committee. Such collaboration was valuable and effective in the process of developing professional procedures and objective criteria for applying for support of innovative teacher projects and evaluating and selecting the proposals. The Project Manager was instrumental in the scheduling and coordination of such collaborative meetings.

Dr. Paula Lester of Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus, participated in the development of the teacher survey instrument and of the grant application form.

Dr. Madeline Long of Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus offered practical recommendations regarding procedures for the review and selection of teacher-developed applications. Recommendations included:

- Elect a chairman.
- Look for a realistic proposal which can be implemented within the limits of time and money.
- Look for proposals that would not be implemented without additional funding.
- Read proposals privately prior to committee discussion.
- Read only what the application actually proposes. Refrain from reading unstated meanings.
- Eliminate nonfundable proposals, and review such proposals to ascertain that decision.
- Focus on content, not delivery.
- Offer recognition to teacher-applicants.
- Seek alternative sources of funding for the proposals.
- Read all abstracts and all applications grants before rating proposals.
- Indicate the priority importance of each criteria.
- Photostat all the abstracts and send them to the committee members prior to the rating procedure.
- Categorize the applications into groups for discussion purposes.
- Adhere to the deadline date.

- Rate each of the proposals quantitatively, particularly the disqualified proposals.

- Choose well to increase the probability of success.

Dr. Long also engaged in a point-by-point review of the grant application. Recommendations included interpreting the need so that the grant addresses a situation, rather than solves a problem; accepting one objective as sufficient; and being attentive to the personal background or expertise of the teacher-developer. In addition, Dr. Long recommended ranking the proposals so that a backup project is available in the event that the first award is not implemented.

The participation of outside consultants in committee meetings provided the teacher committee with the benefit of experienced insights. The collaborative workshops and the materials which were produced were instrumental in the effective development and successful implementation of this project.

E. Selection

Grant application forms were produced on one preprinted 11 x 17 sheet of paper folded in booklet form. On the cover, teacher-developers indicated which specified area or areas of priority their project addressed. Specifically they were to check one or more of the following:

- curriculum improvement

- in-service development

- contribution to teaching

- cost-effective programs

- community involvement

On the remainder of the one-page booklet, teacher-developers provided the following information:

- brief abstract of grant

- narrative description of particular problem addressed

- statement of clear, measurable objectives in terms of student outcomes

- description of at least two activities conducted towards achievement of each stated objective

- time frame for stated activities

- description of project personnel

- Indication of facilities or resources necessary for project implementation
- description of dissemination plans
- description of administrative advisement plans
- description of evaluation methods, procedures, and instruments
- description of project costs within $500 maximum limit

A total of 21 teacher-developed applications were submitted. A letter acknowledging receipt of each proposal was sent to each applicant. The applications ranged over a wide variety of areas as follows:

- V.I.P. Club Social Recreation Evening Program for the Visually Impaired
- Cooking for Physically Disabled Girl Scouts
- Horticulture for Learning, Fun, and Profit
- Employment Census and Directory of Aviation Alumni in Job-Related Fields
- Manipulation Using the Apple Computer
- Short-Term Approach in the Development of a Life Skills Program
- Leather Crafts
- Language and Communication Skills
- Visually Impaired Graduates in the World of Work
- Socialization Group
- Program to Create Counter-Culture Behaviors and Understanding Concerning Drugs and Other Chemical Abuse
- Learning Through Music
- Leadership Development Program
- Program to Teach Social Studies and Creative Writing Through a Multidisciplinary Approach
- A Teacher's Guide for Computer-Generated Overhead Transparencies
- Students' Improvement Through On-Stage Performance

- Prevocational Stock-Boy Skills
- The School-Neighborhood Connection
- A Videotaped Approach to School Experiences in Environmental Education and Historical House Educations
- After-school Socialization Group for Blind and Partially Sighted High School Students
- A Cooperative School Program Linking Handicapped Youngsters with High School Students

Proposals were assigned code numbers to maintain the anonymity of the applicants during blind review of the twenty-one applications. The applications were rated independently by each of the teacher committee members. Ratings were summarized and weighted according to the previously established rating system. Four teacher-developed proposals which achieved the highest numeric ratings were identified.

Although the federal grant commitment provided money for implementation of one innovative project which required no more than $500 support, Nassau BOCES was willing to fund each of the four highest-rated proposals: the V.I.P. Club Social Recreation Evening Program for the Visually Impaired, Cooking for Physically Disabled Girl Scouts, Socialization Group, and A Cooperative School Program Linking Handicapped Youngsters with High School Students.

At this point, District Superintendent Dr. Ira J. Singer reviewed the direction of this project. For each of the four highest-rated proposals, Dr. Singer requested additional specific, detailed information, and assurances concerning one or more of the following issues:

- costs
- liabilities
- supervision
- support from building principals
- support from the BOCES Division of Special Education
- history of the project's development
- availability and capability of staffing
- coordination of participating schools and programs
- parents' releases

- transportation availability and costs
- procedures and plan of operation
- scheduling of dates and hours
- student interest and involvement
- selection of participants

Committee members had previously indicated concern regarding some of the aforementioned issues during the selection process. However, the extremely limited time which had been allotted to the actual process of selecting applications, in addition to the extreme objectivity of the selection process, had prevented discussion of their concerns.

The teacher committee requested the four teacher-developers of the projects under consideration to provide logistics regarding project implementation and also certain assurances as required by Dr. Singer.

Following the provision of the required information and assurances, the Socialization Group project was dismissed from consideration due to its excessive cost. A second project, the Cooperative School Program, was withdrawn by the teacher-developer who announced her resignation from Nassau BOCES.

The remaining two projects were approved. The social recreation monthly Friday evening project for blind and visually impaired adolescents was approved for funding of $500 upon satisfaction by the teacher-developer, of certain participation, staffing, and supervisory considerations. The project to enable severely handicapped girls to compile and test cooking recipes was approved for funding of $500 with stipulations prohibiting the public sale of the recipe books and also direct association through this project with the Girl Scouts as an agency which was considered to be separate from the public school system.

Each of the teacher-developers received a letter thanking them for their participation. The letter announced the selected projects and offered the opportunity to individually review their evaluated applications with the Project Coordinator. Only one teacher requested further information from the Office of Institutional Planning and Research concerning the evaluation of his application.

A formal letter of notification was sent to the two teacher-developers whose projects were approved.

F. Implementation

The teacher committee was apprised of project activities during the implementation phase of these two teacher-developed projects. In addition, the Project Coordinator visited the implementation sites as a representative of the teacher committee.

Two college students were hired to coordinate the meetings of the social recreation evening program for visually impaired adolescents. The program sponsored four meetings and organized various recreational activities including presentation of a skit and planning a party.

The cooking program for severely physically disabled girls compiled and tested recipes towards the production of a cookbook. The grant award was utilized to purchase food and to print enough cookbooks for each participant. The girls hosted a luncheon for their parents, and each parent was presented one copy of the recipe book. Through the donations of the parents, enough money was accumulated to continue the project over the 1987-88 school year.

G. Dissemination

Dissemination of the Support for Innovative Projects Program was implemented on a local, statewide, and national basis.

Building administrators publicized the winning projects within their respective buildings. A BOCES in-house newsletter publicized the winning projects in a two-page bulletin. The article identified the two teacher-developers, and included project abstracts and pictures of actual project implementation.

The NYSET (New York Special Education Teachers) newsletter announced the winning teachers and their projects, providing publicity on a statewide basis.

In November, the Project Director attended a National Director's Meeting for Innovative Projects in Washington, D.C.

H. Teacher Assessment

Assessment questionnaires were completed by sixty-one Nassau BOCES teachers. Nearly all the respondents were classroom teachers. Approximately one-half were secondary teachers; two-fifths taught at the primary and elementary levels; and one-eighth at the intermediate level. The mean average number of years teaching was 16. One-half of the teachers had taught more than 18 years.

Three-quarters of the respondents had been aware of the program "Grants for Innovative Teacher Projects." One-half had become aware of the program through printed flyers, one-third through teacher committee representatives, and approximately one-fifth through administrators and other teachers.

One-fifth of the respondents had applied for a grant under this program. Three-fifths of those who had not applied indicated that they had too many other activities and no time to pursue more. One-third had been either unaware of the project or were not interested. Table 1 displays the reasons that respondents did not apply for a grant under this program.

Table 1

Reasons respondents did not apply

Reason	Percentage
Too many other activities/no time	39%
Unaware of program	15
Not interested	15
Inappropriate	11
Other programs/involvements	4
No encouragement/explanation	4
Amount of money was too small	4
No need for money	4
No ideas	4
Total	100%

Using a three-point scale ranging from very good to poor, respondents rated the program on the following criteria: publicity, incentive to participate, administrative support, guidelines for project development, information provided by the review committee, and feedback. The program received "good" ratings from approximately one-half the respondents on:

- incentive to participate
- guidelines for project development
- information provided by the review committee
- feedback

The program received highest ratings in "feedback" and the lowest ratings in "incentive to feedback." Table 2 displays ratings on each criterion.

Table 2

Ratings of project implementation

Criteria	Rating			
	Very good	Good	Poor	Total
Feedback	41	47	12	100%
Publicity	25%	44%	31%	100%
Guidelines for project development	15	54	31	100%
Information provided by the review committee	14	47	39	100%
Incentive to participate	7	53	40	100%

Three-quarters of the respondents believed that the program should be continued. One-fifth was undecided. Five percent believed that the program should be discontinued. Approximately one-half of the respondents offered additional comments. Nearly four-fifths of the comments supporting continuation fell into one of two categories: benefit to students and stimulation of creative ideas. Table 3 displays reasons for program continuation as indicated by respondents.

Table 3

Reasons for Program Continuation

Reason	Percentage
Beneficial to the students	44%
Stimulates creative ideas	44
Morale	6
Teacher recognition	6

Four respondents offered reasons for discontinuing the program. These reasons were as follow:

- Little or no value for real impact
- Doubtful as to sincerity of implementation
- Not enough encouragement and administrative support
- Projects that won grants were not innovative

Thirty respondents offered recommendations for program improvement. Four respondents stated that the project should not be modified. Three respondents recommended that the program would create greater incentive to participate if recent project successes were publicized. Each of the following was recommended by two respondents (independent of one another):

- Approve all projects
- Give more information to staff
- Explain criteria
- Give money incentive to teachers

One-half of the respondents indicated that they would consider applying for a grant in the future to fund their own projects. One-third of the respondents did not know whether or not they would apply for a grant in the future. Comments indicated that if time permitted and if they had a good idea, then they would apply.

I. Recommendations for Program Improvement

The teacher committee assessed and critiqued the procedural plan which had been developed to encourage and assist teachers in the application for support of innovative projects. The teacher committee made the following recommendations to improve future program implementation:

1. The amount of money available for teacher-developed projects should be raised to at least $1,500. Raising the ceiling for teacher-developed projects may result in a larger quantity of higher quality projects. Moreover, a number of teachers indicated to individuals on the committee that they would participate in the future if the amount of funding were increased (either more money available for specific grants and/or more grants awarded).

2. The amount of funds available to support teacher-developed projects should not be fixed. The amount should be reworked annually to enable funding of worthwhile projects.

3. Teachers would be more interested in developing a project if they were rewarded monetarily. While teachers should not be compensated for submitting an application, it is reasonable to include compensation, perhaps on a special assignment basis, within the project budget particularly if the time spent in project implementation is outside the regular school day. A financial award may be appropriate for teachers whose projects have been selected. The possibility of financial compensation for innovative teachers should be investigated.

4. In developing proposals, teachers should be required to present a detailed and substantiated budget. If, for example, transportation were a budget consideration, the teacher-developer must provide cost estimates based on actual price quotes from transportation providers.

5. The privilege of applying for funding for teacher-developed proposals should be open to all certified school personnel, including nonteaching specialists.

6. A number of teachers did not submit applications because they needed more time to plan their projects properly. Ongoing consideration and evaluation of proposal applications (or revolving deadlines) would eliminate the pressure on teachers of having to meet a deadline in preparing their proposals. Also, ongoing consideration and evaluation would eliminate pressure on the teacher committee to select from among a number of proposals within a limited timeframe.

7. Publicity of the availability of funding for teacher-developed projects should begin in September. Applications should be placed in faculty rooms and school offices.

8. In directing the application procedure, an example of a fundable proposal should be provided. One of the two proposals which won this year may serve as a model (although modification of the application form may make this approach less than effective).

9. Both administrative and union input should be obtained for selecting members of the teacher committee. The policy and philosophy committee might recommend potential members.

10. A teacher committee should include substantial representation of classroom teachers as well as at least one administrator.

11. Members of the teacher committee should be appointed for two-year terms. One-half of the committee should be replaced annually.

12. In view of the fact that a higher proportion of proposals was submitted from the buildings represented on the teacher committee, it appears that personal contact is a factor in motivating teachers to develop proposals. Although each building cannot be represented on the teacher committee, commitment to the project might be promoted if representatives from each building or BOCES program were occasionally invited to committee meetings.

13. More representation on the teacher committee from the occupational education programs is essential. Such representation may be effective in eliciting more proposals from occupational education teachers, and additional representation would be helpful during the discussion/selection procedures. (Despite efforts to include a second occupational education teacher on the committee this year, a volunteer could not be located.)

J. <u>Continuation</u>

Implementation of this pilot program through each of the procedures for teacher-application, review, selection, award, and implementation of innovative teacher-developed projects was successfully accomplished. The project staff and teacher committee determined necessary procedural modifications prior to

implementation of a districtwide program to support innovative teacher projects.

The administration of such projects in our agency will be implemented, in the future, through direct supervision of the appropriate BOCES division. Thus, an occupational education teacher will not compete with a special education teacher for funding, nor will either of these areas be in competition with a teacher from any other division. Each division will assume responsibility for encouraging, supporting, selecting, and implementing teacher-developed grants. The Office of Institutional Planning and Research, the unit which administered the grant for this pilot demonstration, will provide technical assistance to each of the divisions.

Appendix A

Project Activities

PROJECT OUTLINE

Evaluation Questions	Project Activities	Persons Responsible for Activities	When	Data Collection and Analysis
Objective 1				
1. Has a plan for encouraging and assisting teacher innovated projects been developed?	Develop a plan incorporating the development and use of workshops to encourage and assist teachers	University Professor Committee of teachers Project Manager	Sept.-Dec.	Descriptions and critiques of plan by a university professor, a BOCES administrator and a teacher
Objective 2				
1. Has a professional procedure been developed for utilization by teacher applicants seeking support for innovative projects?	Development of professional plan for teacher applicants	University Professor Committee of teachers Project manager	Dec.-Feb.	Descriptions and critique of plan by a university professor, a BOCES administrator, and a teacher
2. Have objective criteria been developed to use for selection of projects by peer review?	Survey development, data collection, analysis and interpretation	Senior researcher	Oct.-Feb.	Statistical analysis of items; factor analysis for subscales
Objective 3				
1. Has collaboration with a university School of Education been ongoing?	Collaboration between university school of Education and committee of teachers	Project manager University professor Committee of teachers	Aug.-July	Dates and summaries of collaborative planning and development activities
2. Has collaboration been effective in producing a plan designed to stimulate innovation in teachers and prospective teachers, and in developing professional procedures and objective criteria by which applications for support of innovative teacher projects may be applied for and evaluated?	Development of plans and procedures	Project Manager University professor Committee of teachers	Aug.-July	Description and evaluation of materials produced
Objective 4				
1. Are teachers interested in developing innovative projects and in applying for support for these projects?	Workshops to stimulate teacher interest	University professor Committee of teachers Project manager	March	Requests for information Workshop attendance Descriptions of projects
2. Are modifications needed in the procedures for planning and applying for support?	Planning of teacher programs Developing applications	Project manager Senior researcher	April-July	Teacher and administrator assessments of procedures for project development and application
3. Are criteria appropriate for objective selection of teacher innovative project?	Selection of project	Project manager Senior researcher	April-July	Analysis of satisfaction with use of select criteria
Objective 5				
5. Have dissemination activities been implemented as planned?	Newspaper coverage Development of informational materials and project reports Awareness workshops Presentation to state and federal legislation Speakers to local organization Publication of articles Dissemination through existing BOCES channels	Project manager Project coordinator Project director Senior researcher to assist in preparation of articles for publication	March-July	Logs of activities Dissemination list Records of requests for information

Appendix B

Review of the Literature

Review of the Literature

Support for Innovative Teacher Projects

The customary process of recognizing talented teachers by promoting them out of the classroom removes good teachers from the classoom and disheartens those who stay behind. Implementation of recognition of teacher merit within the classroom renews teachers' dedication to teaching while simultaneously harnessing teachers' energy and commitment (Mann, 1982). Teacher minigrant programs is one method of recognizing talented teachers within the classroom. These programs locate the best teachers in the system and then support them as they take their already tested, classroom-based ideas to colleagues who have an interest in becoming better teachers.

Minigrant programs are founded upon a belief in the professional capacity of teachers to deal competently in solving specific problems that arise in their practical experience. Teachers have close and ongoing contact with diverse problems. As they develop professionally, using skill and insight to deal with specific situations, they develop practical wisdom and a unique awareness of difficulties (Houle, 1980).

The provision of minigrants to teachers is a way of opening the decisionmaking process to teaching professionals and collaborators within the community. Teacher minigrants bring resources outside of the administrative hierarchy to bear in the classroom while inviting participation in school programs from business and civic leaders, and from community members who do not have children in public school system (Allegheny Conference, 1982). Although the managers (i.e. the educational administrators) share decisionmaking, they do not share authority and responsibility. For the minigrant program to be successful, the decisionmaking process must remain less important than the quality of the decisions that are made (Houle, 1980).

Teacher designed programs are based upon current needs in actual classrooms and school buildings. Such programs have been shown to have a positive impact at the classroom, building, and district levels (Mosher,1983). It has been demonstrated that minigrant programs which allow teachers to act as principals of their own curriculum practices, lead to greater teacher involvement in school projects, to increased knowledge of teaching and learning practices, and to higher levels of teacher satisfaction.

A Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. survey found that 87% of teachers favored a system which would provide teachers with greater opportunities to take on more responsibility and higher pay (Mann, 1982). Mini-grant programs may be one component of such a system.

Criteria

Although criteria for mini-grants awards vary across programs, all share common characteristics. Proposed projects are teacher-initiated and classroom-based. Program objectives are related to district curriculum. Administrative support for the programs is provided within the school. However, goals and objectives are behaviorally defined and subject to evaluation which seeks to demonstrate improvement in the cognitive or affective growth of students (Mann, 1982). Generally, proposals are informal and less competitive and time-consuming than larger scale grants proposals (McGee, 1983a).

Minigrant requirements for the New York City minigrant program, IMPACT II, include the stipulation that programs have a high potential for adaptation. The key components must be transportable. The start-up cost may not exceed $300. And, the developing teacher must be available for workshops and dissemination and committed to continued participation through the adaptation process (Mann, 1982).

The minigrant program of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development in Pennsylvania (1982) supports proposals that are innovative and educational, have clear and realistic goals, "reasonable" activities and procedures, and are beneficial to students.

Specific formats for minigrants applications of various programs vary. Applications criteria may or may not include: historical background, an identified need, rationales for specific objectives, detailed activities and procedures, evaluation plan, budget, letters of endorsement, names of project board members or members of an advisory committee, and a resume of the project director.

The term "appraisal" is recommended as a term which may be applied to the process of evaluation and selection of teacher-developed proposals. "Appraisal" suggests assessment of quality which is the essence of what is sought from evaluation and selection of teacher proposals. The term "peer review," which is sometimes used to describe the process of evaluation and selection of teacher developed proposals, is not recommended inasmuch as the widely used meaning of "peer review" includes many procedures, including some which are controversial, whereby scholars and professionals allocate financial and other resources to the projects of fellow specialists.

Appraisal of proposals probably is always ultimately subjective, however the appraisal process can be greatly aided by the development of objective measurement instruments. It has been recommended that feedback in regard to the outcome of appraisal as it applies to ratings of proposed projects should be available to professionals (Houle, 1980). This recommendation underscores the need for an objective rating procedure.

Successful minigrants programs have in common a formal structure of appraisal based on evaluations by a well-defined group or committee which may or may not have a rotating membership. Under New York City's IMPACT II funding, a review committee comprised mostly of teachers meets once annually to select proposals for implementation. A review committee which awards teacher minigrants program for the Allegheny Conference on Community Development consists of a majority of teachers, as well as representatives from administrative, supervisory, parent, and community groups. Other review committees, such as the one in the San Francisco Educational Fund minigrants program, consist of representatives from business and the labor sectors as well as educators (Allegheny Conference, 1982; Calvin & Kenn, 1982; McGee, 1983 a & b).

Dissemination

A common feature of minigrant programs is emphasis upon dissemination to teachers through teacher-to-teacher interaction. Dissemination to teachers is a major focus of activity in the New York City minigrant program (Mann, 1982). The New York City minigrant program, created in 1979 through a $250,000 a year grant by the Exxon Foundation, was conceptualized as a teacher-to-teacher network program to improve schooling in New York City. Its purpose was to reward and recognize creative New York City public school teachers through identification, support, documentation, dissemination, and adaption of successful classroom-based teacher-developed programs. Qualifying teachers receive developer grants of $300. Teachers who attempt implementation of these innovations in their classrooms may apply for replicator grants of $200.

Forty cents of each dollar of the IMPACT II program has been spent for teacher developer and replication grants. Much of the balance of IMPACT II funds has been invested in dissemination through a teacher-to-teacher network. Various means are employed for this purpose. A published brochure outlines the program's history and gives information about eligibility and criteria. A catalog profiles 91 teacher-developed programs and identifies eligibility requirements for program replication grants of $200. Publicity newsletters are produced at regular intervals. Developers and replicators are feted at prestigious gatherings and receptions (such as annual Grants Awards Ceremonies) which identify the participants as a

select group. Workshop presentations led by teachers are scheduled throughout the year. IMPACT II includes arrangements for interschool visits. In addition, programs on videotape are available on request.

New York City's IMPACT II provides teachers with opportunities to train or be trained. Also, it allots released time for interschool and classroom visitations by teachers and for the professional exchange of ideas. The program also encourages individual teachers to recruit other teachers by providing substitutes to cover developers' classes. According to the teachers, the dollar grants have been less important than the network of social and professional support into which grantees are drawn. Teachers are put in contact with others like themselves who have ideas to implement and time to give (Mann, 1982).

Community Support

The Greenfield Secondary Schools Project (GSSP) existed in Massachusetts as an organized planning and program development and grant writing system to provide leadership and encourage community involvement. Between 1979 and 1981, the GSSP secured more than $250,000 in grants and community based services to establish eight projects. This collaborative effort between a school system, a state department, and a university school of education was abandoned due to the passage of Proposition 2 1/2 which eliminated appropriation of local funds for support of new programs (Maloy, 1982).

In San Francisco, was earmarked for operating expenses and $250,000 for direct minigrant funding to 98 programs in 55 schools. Teachers were encouraged to apply for program funding by means of announcements which were placed in their mailboxes. An allocations committee, consisting of board members and volunteers, examined the teacher-developed proposals and made recommendations to a Board of Directors. Evaluation consisted of financial and narrative reports which were required of grant recipients at the conclusion of their projects as well as evaluation visits which were conducted by the San Francisco Education Fund (SFEF).

The success of the SFEF program was attributed to the leadership of its full-time director, to the active participation of the president of the Board of Directors, to the decision to focus upon teacher-initiated programs at individual schools, and to the support of a group of businessmen who regularly sought to assist the project (Calvin, 1982).

The SFEF program, as others, have found sources of support for minigrants programs in their local communities through participation of business and industry, civic clubs, family and community foundations, teacher unions, school systems and central offices, local benevolent associations, and municipal

and state agencies (Allegheny Conference, 1982; Maloy, 1982). Effective steps towards obtaining funding from community sources include development and publicity of a grant proposal and establishment of positive relationships with current and prospective grantors.

Evaluation of Minigrants

An appraisal committee may develop a statement of the standards of good practice to guide the implementation of teacher-developed proposals. Although visitations are made to classrooms where minigrants are implemented, minigrants programs generally do not conduct formal reviews of observation visits (Mann, 1982).

One hundred thirty-six recipients of IMPACT II minigrants completed an assessment questionnaire before and after receiving grants. The purpose of these questionnaires was to assess changes in their teaching practices in regard to small group instruction, individualized instruction, interdisciplinary instruction, independent-study projects, and self instruction. The program evaluators found that after participation in IMPACT II, and particularly through exposure to other innovations at in-service development sessions, three-quarters of the developers and three-quarters of the replicators reported changes in their methods of presentation and in their the use of innovative teaching ideas. Ninety percent of the respondents reported improvement in student discipline and attendance. These were ascribed to the contagious effect of teacher enthusiasm (Mann, 1982).

In addition to an association between participation in IMPACT II and teaching behavior, it was found that 83% of IMPACT II participants reported gains in self-esteem. Program evaluators theorized that positive gains in self esteem were related to the fact that teacher-initiated programs challenged teachers to develop original ideas, to manage the implementation process, and to take responsibility for convincing others to adapt their ideas. The $200 to $300 which was provided for start-up materials was regarded as insignificant by the teachers. The program had real intangible benefits. These were the professional self-fulfillment achieved through the dissemination aspects of the project. One-half of the replicators and one-third of the developers reported that the most beneficial aspect of the program was networking with other teachers (Mann, 1982).

Replicators had few opportunities for active participation in the IMPACT II dissemination network. However, it was concluded that the staff development activities in which these teachers participated led to better classroom practice through its effect on teaching behaviors.

The success of minigrants programs may be inferred from their adaptation in school systems throughout the country. A number of districts now offer developer grants for production of materials needed to disseminate, assist, document, and support "adaptor grants" to teachers who wish to reproduce selected classroom-based materials, activities, and programs. The New York City minigrant program has been adopted in Houston, Texas; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; San Francisco, California; Boston, Massachusetts; and in Rockland County, New York. In Rockland County, more than 20 school districts are presently planning or creating staff development activities based on the IMPACT II model.

IMPACT II and other minigrants programs are supported by the United Federation of Teachers through publicity in the union newspaper as well as in statements of support from union officials (Mann, 1982).

Teacher minigrants provide a supportive structure to teachers who are seeking professional growth. They instill a climate which formally encourages professional development and an atmosphere of mutual growth and stimulation.

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